



## College Newsletter Winter 2010



"A gold medal is a wonderful thing, but if you're not enough without it, you'll never be enough with it." Irv Blitzer (John Candy), Cool Runnings

### *Playing Sports in College*

Many high school athletes dream of playing collegiate sports. Along with those dreams there is often the hope of scholarship dollars and the possibility of next competing at a professional level. College athletics can provide many wonderful perks, but high school students need to fully understand what is involved in a commitment to a college sport.

There are several divisions of college sports. NCAA (National Collegiate Athletic Association) Division I is the best known, but there is also NCAA Division II and Division III. Additionally, there are other leagues such as the NAIA and the NJCAA. Division I schools typically put the most money into their athletics programs and thus usually offer the best scholarships. Division II colleges can also offer athletic scholarships, but Division III schools cannot.

Although athletes often receive some preferential treatment in the admissions process, they still have to maintain good grades in high school and be accepted by the college's Admissions Office. For Division I and Division II play, NCAA has guidelines about the courses a student must take in high school and the score(s) that must be achieved on standardized assessments.

Families are frequently misled into believing that all athletes receive free rides to college. However, schools are restricted by the NCAA on the amount of money that can be offered in athletic scholarships. Although key players may get a "full ride," the average athletic scholarship is approximately \$10,000 per year.

Playing a Division I sport can be tremendously taxing. There are extreme demands on time for the purpose of training, meetings, practice, and travel as well as the games themselves. An athlete has to be very disciplined in order to be successful in academics, sports and have a social life.

There are advantages to playing on a Division III squad that all athletes should consider. Division III colleges tend to be smaller. This usually gives athletes a

chance to be "a big fish in a small pond." There is often more playing time on teams, as well as more individual attention in the classroom because of smaller class sizes. And even though athletic scholarships cannot be offered, an athlete may still receive special consideration for admission and a merit scholarship.

Students who hope to play sports in college should begin by asking their present coach for an honest assessment of this possibility. Only 6% of high school athletes ever go on to play in college. Next, a student should learn the NCAA rules about recruitment and high school achievement. An athletic resume should be started and college contacts initiated by the student. In the final college decision, a student should be confident that the institution is, indeed, a good match for his or her athletic, scholastic, and personal goals.

#### *Questions to Ask Your Recruiter*

- Request information on your specific areas of academic interest
- Ask the recruiter if he or she is the head coach, an assistant coach, alumnus, admission rep?
- Ask about the details of any scholarships – are there any strings attached? Is it for one year? How does it get renewed?
- What is the college's graduation rate for athletes? Is tutoring available?
- What is expected of players during the season? During the off season?
- What happens if you are placed on academic probation? Does it impact a scholarship?

*Check it out ✓*

[www.kathrynmarch.com](http://www.kathrynmarch.com) recommends the following website: [www.ncaa.org](http://www.ncaa.org) for more information about student athletes and recruiting.